

## Facing the Future on Firm Footing (Part 3)

*“Staying in Love” (Romans 8:16)*

**Introduction:** Immediately following salvation, the Spirit of God enters our life and confirms that a new loving relationship has been established with God. Knowing what that relationship is and how it works is what gives me the firm footing I need to live for the Lord in harmony and right fellowship with Him. Over the remaining weeks of January, I want us to spend some time being sure we are starting the New Year, “Facing the Future on Firm Footing.” Dealing with the knowable things can establish us a firm foundation upon which we can stand and move forward with great confidence!

In our text Paul tells us, *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” (Rom 8:16)* It is God’s Spirit within us that produces our love and obedience to God and His Word.

In the previous verses Paul told us... (Rom 8:14) In contrast with the control of sin, which enslaves to the point of fear, believers have received the Spirit of adoption. Adoption- means "placing as a son"

Believers are adopted sons (Gal 4:5; Eph 1:5), not slaves (Gal 4:7); We don’t serve, love, and obey God because we have to, but rather because we want to! As long as we are dependent upon God for our strength and obedient to His Word, we will experience the grace of a new Christian’s “First love” (Which is to be God Himself or keeping God first). However, the danger many overlook is, that it is easy to grieve the Spirit of God and to leave our first love in pursuit of other things.

We must do all we should to stay in love with the Lord and keep Him first in our lives or we will lose our first love which is the greater tragedy for many Christians today. How can we stay in love with the Lord? There are several things we must understand to protect our love for the Lord and keep Him first.

### I. We must understand it is very possible to leave our first love: (Rev. 2:2-5)

#### A. We can look good and still lose our first love

1. *On the outside to themselves and everyone else they looked good!*
2. *But God doesn’t look at the outside, He looks into our hearts...*

#### B. We can serve the Lord for a variety of reasons (Many of which are not good)

**But if our service for the Lord is not born** out of a devoted love for the Lord it is worthless! (1 Kg.14:25-27) *Too many Christians today. The enemy has come in and made off with the gold of our devotion and left us to make do with brass instead.*

It looks good, it looks real, but it is really just a cheap imitation of real love and devotion to the Lord we used to have. (And many say like foolishly like Rehoboam, “It will do.”)

### II. We must understand how we leave our first love:

*Again, I refer you to the words of Jesus to the church at Ephesus:*

#### A. They were working for God – That wasn’t the problem...

We can be very busy for God and still not have the joy of keeping Him as our first love.

**B. They definitely had knowledge of the Word of God** (That wasn’t the problem...) They knew enough to root out evil and false teachers (they used the word of God to do these things) Yet Jesus charged them with losing their first love!

**C. No doubt this was a praying church** – But anyone can pray and be spiritually cold. *Unfortunately, this is the spiritual condition of many people today. They are cold spiritually, and sadly are oblivious of their true condition.*

**D. They were a witnessing church** – *Laboring for the Lord, they witnessed to the truth without fainting!*

*keeping or losing our first love is not as much about what we are doing for God or not doing for God. We leave our first love when we lose our daily awareness of our need for God!*

### III. We must understand we can lose our sense of need for our first love:

**A. Our need for God is the very motivation that brings us to salvation!**

**B. However, once God begins to meet our needs, we tend to forget that we have any.** (Rev 3:17; Deut. 8:11-15)

This is the very same sequence that takes place in our hearts and lives today...

**C. We have a tendency to forget our daily and desperate need for God.**

1. The more aware of this need the more sincere our praise becomes.
2. But when we are secure for the future and well situated in the present... We forget. (Prov 30:8-9) is a wise prayer.

Whenever we lose our sense of daily desperate need for God we have left our first love! But an equal danger is what happens next... we begin to put other things in the place of our first love.

### IV. We must understand how we let other things replace our first love: This can happen very subtly... It happens when:

**A. God provides for all of our needs,** but we become vain thinking that is all of our won strength or wisdom that we met our needs.

*If we expect money or anything else to do for us what only God can do, then money or that something else will become our god.*

**B. When problems which are beyond our** resources to solve come and threaten us and our security, fear sets in.

*Have you ever felt like you can’t sense God’s direction in your life? It’s possible you can’t clearly hear His instructions because you’re already following the direction you received from somewhere or someone else that you’ve replaced Him with.*

*We are reminded what Prov 3:5-6 wisely instructs us*

**Conclusion:** *It is God’s Spirit within us that produces our love and obedience to God and His Word which sets our feet on firm footing!* But is it our job to be sure we stay in love with the Lord and not grieve the Spirit above all else.